

September 9, 2002

Governor Frank O'Bannon
State House
Indianapolis, Indiana

Dear Governor O'Bannon,

A year has passed since the Legislature enacted, and you signed, House Enrolled Act 1510, to create Indiana's first statewide voter registration system. We should be proud that Indiana was one of the few states able to reach a bipartisan consensus on an election reform bill in 2001, and one of an even smaller number of states which appropriated funds to implement a statewide voter registration system.

Despite our strong start, our progress towards implementation of the General Assembly's mandate has been slowed. In large part, this was the result of the state budget shortfall that led you to freeze expenditures from the Build Indiana Fund, and later to reallocate funds previously appropriated to implement of the statewide voter registration system.

Recognizing these constraints, I have sought to find innovative methods and partnerships that would enable Indiana to meet the July 1, 2004 deadline.

I am pleased that recent discussions with other state agencies and officials have brought forward a possibility for achieving this goal. Currently, many state agencies are in the process of planning of implementing projects that share a common goal: to use the Internet to share information with their counterparts in county government in all 92 Indiana counties.

Over the last three months, at the invitation of Justice Frank Sullivan, the Co-Directors of the Indiana Election Division, my Special Assistant Stephanie Mannon and I, have met with the entire JTAC project planning team. Together, we have explored the possibility of integrating our projects to make the most efficient use of precious resources. State Court Administration has awarded a contract to Computer Associates to develop the statewide case management project and is offering to work with the Secretary of State's Office to develop a software application for the statewide voter file. They have assured us that any application will contain both the flexibility and the necessary security features to address the concerns of county election administrators and the Election Division. We have begun to identify the outstanding questions and issues that would arise from our partnership in this area.

On May 17, Justice Sullivan and I attended a meeting convened by Laura Larimer of DOIT and Jerry Sullivan of Intelenet to address "Connectivity Options and Enterprise Solutions for State and County Court House Offices". Representatives from FSSA, the Department of Health, the Department of Revenue, the State Police, and the State

Emergency Management Agency were also present to discuss how each agency's "connectivity project" with county governments might be accomplished with considerable savings to both the state and counties by sharing the hardware and software necessary to communicate with one another.

This meeting was a great beginning. Although there are still questions regarding the cost sharing for these joint projects, each agency agreed to move the discussion forward by designating staff to participate in two committees: one to discuss marketing and communications with counties, and another to discuss technology issues. Both Co-Directors of the Election Division have volunteered to serve on the marketing and communications committee, and will be discussing the Division's representation on the technology committee.

These are exciting and encouraging developments. However, I need your help to move us forward toward our goal of a statewide voter registration system.

The time has come to begin addressing the technology issues that must be sorted out in the implementation of the statewide voter registration system. I am convening a group of "stakeholders" to undertake this work. This group consists of county election administrators with the technical experience to raise and address critical questions. The group will also be able to draw upon skilled technical staff from both state committees, voter registration system vendors, and the Election Division.

Although there may be a need to communicate the technology issues identified by this group to the larger Intelenet group, the legal complexity (and critical importance) of managing and securing voter registration data makes this sort of "in house" discussion critical.

My office (and the Republican State Committee) believes that progress towards implementing the statewide voter registration system should be one of the highest priorities of the Indiana Election Division this year. I have shared this view with my party's Co-Director, who has pledged his energetic support to achieve this goal.

However, the bipartisan structure of the Election Division requires that both Co-Directors (and the Election Commission) share a common vision and cooperate to achieve anything. I believe that your party's Co-Director has already worked to advance our goals by participating in meeting with JTAC, and in raising important issues for discussion.

I urge you to convey your views to your party's Co-Director regarding the priority that the Election Division should give to the implementation of the statewide voter registration system in two areas:

- Meeting with the "Voter Registration Technology Group"
- Continuing the discussions with JTAC and Intelenet regarding these partnerships.

I am certain that with support and direction from both parties, the Co-Directors can work together over the next several months to make significant progress in this area.

However, I recognize that the Election Division has limited staff and technical expertise to devote to this effort. The implementation of the statewide voter registration system will be an extremely complex project that requires extraordinary skill and focused project management.

For county clerks, the controversy and frustrations that arose from the state's implementation of ISETS are not forgotten. Likewise, through our involvement with political campaigns, we have both experienced frustrations with the quality and timeliness of data from the current state voter registration file. Although I am heartened by the improvements that have been made in the voter registration file this year, I know that it is critical for our new statewide voter registration system to be responsive to the unique needs of our state committees and to those of county election administrators.

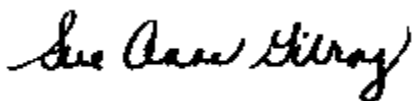
For this reason, I urge that you join me in supporting a request from the Election Division Co-Directors for the allocation of up to \$300,000 by the State Budget Committee to contract for services to develop detailed technical specifications for the statewide voter registration system after receiving input from all interested parties and to develop a detailed timeline for testing and implementing the system. On July 27, I met with Budget Agency Director Marilyn Shultz and conveyed this request.

I appreciate the willingness of JTAC to offer staff assistance in designing software to address the needs of the statewide voter registration system. However, the complexity of the task makes it essential for this project to have a full-time advocate dedicated to preserving the interests of the ultimate users of the system – both state party committees and local election administrators.

The opportunity to combine our resources for the Voter File and JTAC will soon pass. If we act now, we have the chance to save the taxpayers of Indiana \$4.5 million dollars. If we do not – we could be accused of the mismanagement of precious resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these views and concerns with you. I look forward to discussing them with you further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sue Anne Gilroy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sue Anne Gilroy

Secretary of State